



KEYWORD RESEARCH

INTEGRATED SEARCH STRATEGY PPC AND SEO



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
WHAT IS KEYWORD RESEARCH?	4
DEVELOPING AN SEO KEYWORD STRATEGY	5
WHAT IS A PAID SEARCH (PPC) KEYWORD STRATEGY?	7
ONE PLAN, MULTIPLE ANGLES	9
KEYWORDS INVOLVING ANSWERS	10
SUMMARY	13



INTRODUCTION

For those who have read our eBooks in the past, or who have visited the blog, you will know that one of the most important messages we try to communicate is that businesses need to have a bespoke search and digital marketing strategy based on their audience, their market, their competitors and their message.

Brands need to have a clear idea of the purpose of their marketing activity, and whether the focus is to inform or sell.

Of course, the end goal is always to make sales. Whether these sales are easily attributed direct marketing or not, that is a different question. It is for this reason that we always look at promoting an integrated strategy, where all of your activity comes together to show the overall picture of your business.

One thing that stays the same however, is keyword research. These are the terms that you want your brand or business to show up for based on certain user queries. When somebody searches, you want to make sure that it is your website that delivers the best (most relevant) answer. Why does this matter? If you're not on page one of the search engine results pages (SERPs), then you are nowhere.

WHAT IS KEYWORD RESEARCH?

Keyword research and analysis are two of the most important, valuable and high return activities in search. Targeting the right keywords is vital to your organic search (SEO) visibility and strategy.

A 'keyword', as the term is used in search marketing, is a word or phrase that is used as a search query by searchers in order to find answers to questions, find goods or services or address any other search requirement.

You need to carry out research to identify the phrases and topics to target to create high quality content that meets your target customers' needs.

As well as helping your site to rank, thorough keyword research will give you a much greater insight into what your customers want.

This will allow you to increase your visibility, improve the relevance of your traffic, reduce irrelevant traffic or leads, and enhance user experience.

Bear in mind that targeting keywords just because they have high search volumes won't help you increase your ROI (return on investment) if the people using those search terms aren't looking for what you offer. Relevance is key.

How do you determine the type of keywords that are the most suitable for your business, and for which you want to be found? This will depend on the overall objectives of your business and your website.

What do you want people to do when they get to your website? Do you want visitors to sign up for a newsletter, or download an app? Are you selling a product or service?



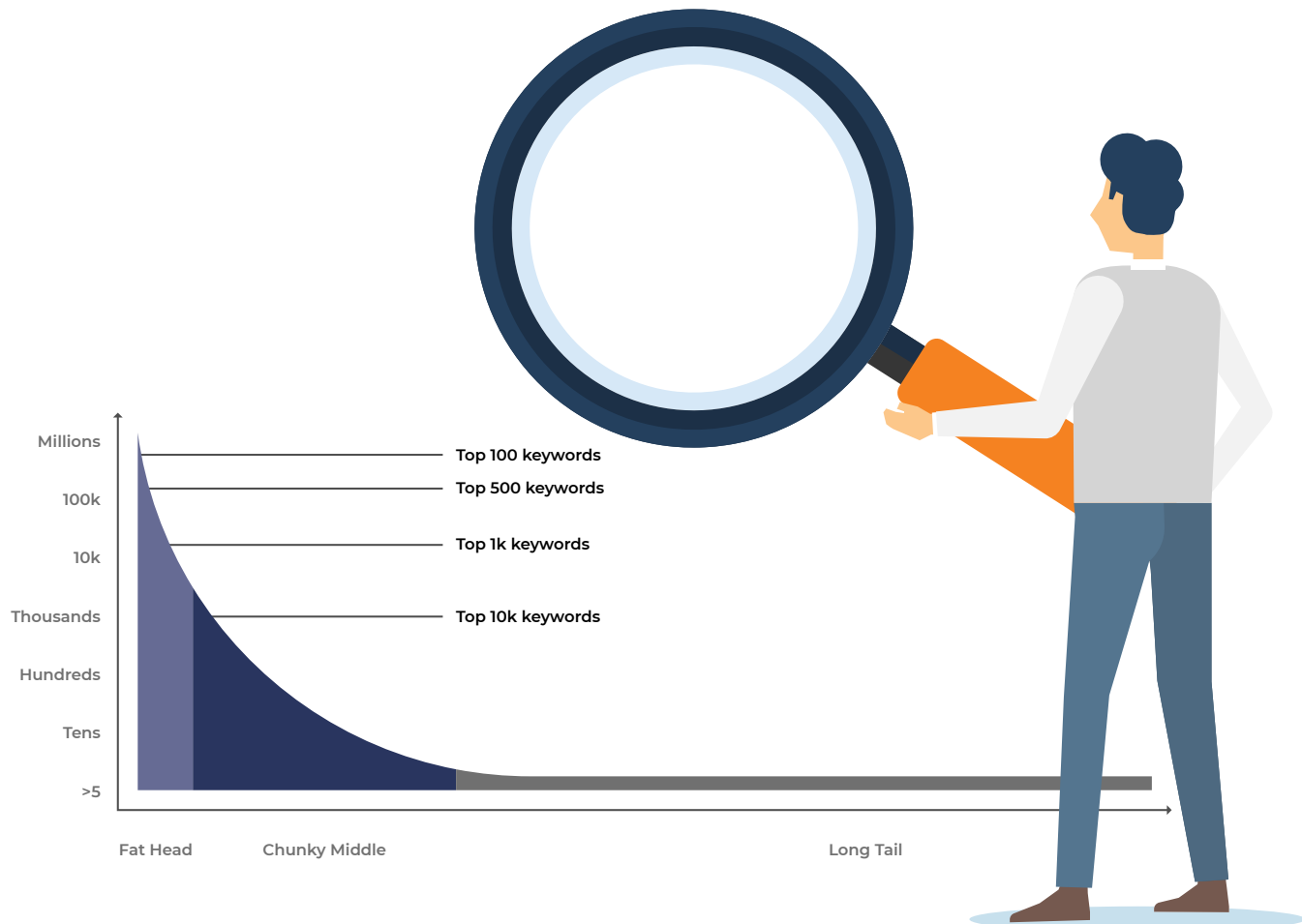
DEVELOPING AN SEO KEYWORD STRATEGY

Keyword research is a vital part of any SEO campaign, whether it is used to mould on-page copy, or to develop brand or product positioning, it is imperative that it is not only done, but done thoroughly and well.

As language parsing has improved with the advent of 2013 Google algorithm update Hummingbird and the new levels of query relevancy determination offered by RankBrain, a lot of brands and agencies have begun to place less importance on the role of keywords in SEO.

Though this change allows writers to express themselves with fluency and without being reliant on keyword anchoring, it cannot be overlooked from the perspective of a potential consumer.

For example – if someone is looking to make a purchase for a new hobby, in which they are interested, but about which they lack a degree of knowledge of key terms, then they are going to be searching more generally and are going to rely on strategies that account for this. In addition, good keyword research will reveal gaps – areas your competitors are not competing in, or competing only marginally. If your brand is new to a marketplace, the chances are that competitors will be well established for trophy keywords, whereas there may be appropriate, industry specific long tail gaps that can be exploited for early gains.



This is a good time to start thinking about your buyer personas, what are they looking for, what will they want to know and at what stage in the buying cycle will they want to know it? Think about how you search on a phone as opposed to on a laptop. Are there differences in your own search types from one device to another? What are your intentions across devices?

Think about levels of interest and expertise of your buyer personas – are people looking for brand specific items, using specific industry jargon more likely to want to buy or to need information than those searching for generic, non-specific terms? How can your keyword targeting nurture the buyer journey by delivering the right content at the right time?

Once you have assembled lists of key terms and questions, use online tools (such as Google's Keyword Planner) to quantify density and, therefore, which of these should be the focus of your efforts. Ideally you're looking for the golden ration of low competition and high volume. Also, use Analytics to monitor in-site searches – those customers are searching while on your page – as well as popular landing pages and seek to consolidate these terms externally.

Four simple steps

- **Think like a customer** – pick keywords likely to be searched by your buyer personas.
- **Look for gaps** – in a crowded marketplace it can be difficult for newcomers to compete against established companies. So don't compete, find where they aren't present.
- **Rank for priority** – it is counterproductive to spread yourself too thin, so choose your targets wisely and look for the golden ration of high volume, low competition.
- **Consolidate gains** – if you begin to rank for certain terms, don't rest on your laurels but continue to target these keywords as you expand your target list.

WHAT IS A PAID SEARCH (PPC) KEYWORD STRATEGY?

PPC keyword strategies are multi-faceted, taking in data mining and analysis, research and creative elements. However, the process can be reduced to four key elements of research and execution: creating buyer personas, looking for gaps in the market, ranking for priority and searching for the golden ratio of high traffic, low competition, and reading and catering for intent.

Identify your audience

As with an organic keyword strategy, begin by creating buyer personas for whom you can identify levels of intent and types of queries that may typify these stages. The next step is to brainstorm words or terms around your goods and services. Put yourself in your customers' shoes and think about who, what and where they will be searching for when trying to connect with sites like yours. Combine this with information from your Analytics account to see what consumers are searching for on your site or to check anchor text for inbound links.

Refine your list

Now that you've built up a list of words, try using a concatenation tool, such as Merge, to create a list of search terms you can then proceed to refine.

After removing non-applicable terms, you can refine the list using a keyword research tool to check for traffic, for example, using Google's Keyword Planner – enter your URL and your industry and it will show you suggestions with search volumes.

This process of refinement is about finding those areas which are best suited to your brand's financial and market position. By narrowing down your list by those terms with the highest traffic and a recommended bid which is within your comfort zone, you can reduce your list to terms you know you can successfully compete for, that have sufficient traffic to drive conversions and which are representative of your brand.

Once you have these lists, you can then segment them by the level of purchase intent they demonstrate: more specific searches often demonstrate that a searcher is much closer to making a decision to buy, as demonstrated in our spiral diagram below. For example, a 'buy white adidas trainers' search is much closer to conversion than simply 'white trainers'.

Group your keywords

Next, you'll need to group these under common themes to form your campaigns in Google AdWords. Google recommends 5 to 20 keywords per ad group, and each ad group should contain keywords that directly relate to the group's theme. These ad groups will form your specific matches with keywords of these five main types:

Broad match

Broad match keywords will “include misspellings, synonyms, related searches and other relevant variations”. These more generic terms are useful to ensure a higher number of impressions and a greater flow of traffic, but are the least effective at targeting.

Broad match modified

Broad match modified keywords will “contain the modified term (or close variations, but not synonyms), in any order”. Your ad will show only when someone’s search contains the words within your keyword, or close variations of the words (close variations can include synonyms, abbreviations and misspellings).

Phrase match

Phrase match keywords “are a phrase, and close variations of that phrase”. Your ad will show only when someone searches for a term that contains the keyword within the phrase, with or without additional words before or after it, as well as close variations.

Exact match

Exact match keywords include “exact term and close variations of that exact term”. These keywords give you specific control of which search terms you want to match, which helps with budgeting and results in high relevancy.

	Example keywords	Could appear in a search for...
Broad match	yellow socks	yellow christmas stockings
Broad match + modifier	+yellow +socks	socks in yellow
Phrase match	“yellow socks”	buy yellow socks
Exact match	[yellow socks]	yellow socks

Review performance & tweak as necessary

Through careful and consistent review, you will begin to identify more keywords for which to compete and more you should exclude (‘negative’ keywords). Ensure keyword research is a key and regular part of your PPC account management time.

You can develop your campaigns using AdWords’ search query report (SQR) tool. The SQR allows you to research what queries are connecting to your current keywords and allows you to refine your targeting and identify opportunities that you are currently missing. Improving relevancy is one part of improving Ad Rank and Quality Score, which can boost your click-through-rate and save you money in bids.

ONE PLAN, MULTIPLE ANGLES

When we speak about understanding both your audience and your business goals we know that there isn't a single approach that will work for every business. That said, it is possible to generate a keyword strategy that can be segmented out based on the services you offer and how you want to break your marketing budget down. Brands often start with SEO and then find that they want to run social campaigns or bid on keywords in paid search.

To build a campaign that converts you need to keep a very close eye on those keywords. When researching and planning your PPC and SEO campaigns for a product, brand or service, you should be:

- identifying relevant, high-intent keywords
- eliminating negative keywords from the mix
- organising your campaign into relevant ad groups

Doing this will help you make informed decisions to return the best SEO results and will also ensure that you are bidding on profitable words in your PPC efforts.

Search Engine Journal recently covered the benefits of a multifaceted approach. They said that a well-orchestrated PPC campaign can benefit a good SEO campaign. When a brand starts to target SEO and already has a PPC strategy, they are arguably in a better position. Why is this? Well because with PPC there tends to be more intent.

There is little point in ranking for a 50,000 search volume keyword if the intent is knowledge discovery. You'd be better off targeting a 10,000 search volume keyword if the intent is commercial and "to buy." The beauty here however is that businesses can use SEO and content to build knowledge and PPC can convert the customer, all from the same keyword.

KEYWORDS INVOLVING ANSWERS

The first thing that all businesses should do is assess their current positioning in the market and look at how their competitors are performing. In fact at the first stage you may not even know who you are competing against so this is a good way to find out a little more about who is operating in your targeted marketing space.

Users today want to get the answers to their queries quickly and easily. They also want to make sure that the results that are returned are relevant and that they are from a trusted or apparently trusted source, (this latter point is important as it goes without saying that customers want a trusted service, the problem is that if you are new to the space then you have to appear as professional, relevant and authentic as possible).

Customers and users tend to be looking for one of the following things:

- an accurate answer
- an item
- a specific set of details
- a date
- an image
- an address
- a service
- a definition

In an official definition, there are three broad categories that cover most web search queries: informational, navigational, and transactional. These are also called “do, know, go.” The three areas are:

- **Informational queries** – Queries that cover a broad topic (eg Liverpool or New Cars) for which there may be thousands of relevant results.
- **Navigational queries** – Queries that seek a single website or web page of a single entity (eg YouTube or Facebook).
- **Transactional queries** – Queries that reflect the intent of the user to perform a particular action, like purchasing a car or downloading a screen saver.

It is worth noting that search engines often support a fourth type of query that is used far less frequently and is much more advanced. These are connectivity queries – queries that report on the connectivity of the indexed web graph (eg ‘which links point to this URL?’, and ‘how many pages are indexed from this domain name?’).

One of the best tools that we have used is Answer the Public – This allows businesses to generate a list of questions that are relevant to their audience based on the sector they operate in. Adding a search term or keyword into the engine automatically searches for the longer phrases and questions that users or potential customers are looking for. The image below shows an entry for ‘heating oil’ this search brings back hundreds of relevant questions which can be used for content creation. We often refer to this as User Focused Content (UFC).



With all of this in mind, the first thing to do is to run a search query on Google using what you consider to be your best keywords and the most common questions your audience would ask. Look at the results and make notes on which competitors rank for these terms. You can use this information as part of your competitor analysis later down the line.

It is crucial in these early discovery phases that you are listening to how your customers speak, then in turn speaking their language. Brands need to understand what your prospects and customers are looking for, then reflect this knowledge to your website content.



Once you have assembled lists of key terms and questions, use online tools (such as Google's Keyword Planner) to quantify density and, therefore, which of these should be the focus of your efforts. Ideally you're looking for the golden ratio of low competition and high volume. Also, use Analytics to monitor in-site searches – those customers are searching while on your page – as well as popular landing pages and seek to consolidate these terms externally.

If your content is well optimised and keyword rich you are halfway there. Marketing expert, author, and speaker, Ann Handley said:

“Businesses should use different content types to answer client questions and understand their obstacles whilst providing solutions.

“Be sure you know the purpose or mission or objective of every piece of content that you write. What are you trying to achieve? What information, exactly, are you trying to communicate? And why should your audience care?” Provide answers. Be helpful. Solve their problems. Make your content relevant and rich. And when possible provide narrowed, niche content. Ensure your content has sharing value and gives your highest quality visitors what they're asking for.”

You should also use the research that you have conducted on keywords and competitors to populate things such as your page titles, URLs, image tags (alt-tags), and meta descriptions as these on-page SEO factors will affect your individual page rank in search results.

If you can fit these points into your strategy, and learn to behave like a potential visitor to your site then it is fair to assume that you will be more relevant, trustworthy and best of all, found online.



SUMMARY

Some marketers still think of SEO and PPC strategies as completely separate entities. This is especially common at an entry level, where marketing campaigns often have unclear goals.

When running both organic and ad campaigns simultaneously, you have more data to collect and analyse. You may discover more unexpected details about your target audience, and use that information to refine your SEO and PPC strategies accordingly.

Keep in mind that both SEO and PPC are constantly adapting to changes in the Google algorithms. That is how they help websites meet the new requirements and maintain their high positions.

So keep an eye on the most significant changes, and do not forget to update your SEO and PPC strategies on a regular basis.



GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

ABOUT US

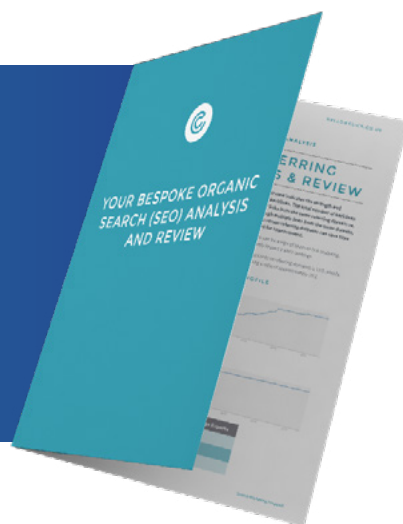
Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

YOUR BESPOKE ORGANIC SEARCH (SEO) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

REQUEST NOW



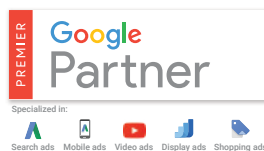
Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#), or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

0845 205 0292

OUR ACCREDITATIONS



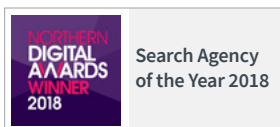
**The Drum
Recommended**



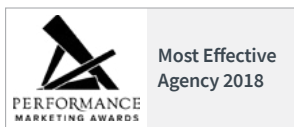
OUR AWARDS



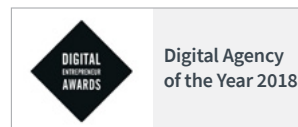
SEO Agency of
the Year 2019



Search Agency
of the Year 2018



Most Effective
Agency 2018



Digital Agency
of the Year 2018

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitor **TRAX** rank **TRAX** feed **TRAX** link **TRAX** pro **TRAX** page **TRAX**